

September 28, 1959



MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
September 25, 1959

Others present: Secretary Herter, Ambassador Lodge, Ambassador Thompson, Mr. Merchant, General Goodpaster

The President welcomed Ambassador Lodge back after his trip. He said he had read his reports with the greatest of interest. It seemed that the trip was going better all the while. Mr. Lodge confirmed that this was true, after hitting bottom at Los Angeles. Leading to that were several incidents, first the disrespectful and immature performance at the Press Club in Washington, followed by heckling by a few drunks at the Economic Club session in New York, and what was really a vulgar, even obscene show on the set in Hollywood. The publicity people at the studio wanted pictures for promotional purposes of the dancers with Khrushchev and quite obviously he was offended at this treatment of the Premier of Russia.

Although Lodge had said he would arrange for a trip to Disneyland, while on the plane, the Chief of Police of Los Angeles said he would not accept responsibility after there was a tomato-throwing incident coming in from the airport. Gromyko presented his "demarche" to Lodge at 2 AM and this was the low point of the trip. The turning point came on the platform at Santa Barbara. Although the security people objected, Ambassador Lodge took responsibility for leaving the train with Khrushchev and the crowds gave him a very cordial reception. San Francisco was wonderful in every respect, capitalizing on the poor performance at Los Angeles. The public were fine and the President's appeal had wide impact. Then there was a splendid day in Iowa. Mr. Garst is a phenomenon in himself. Again there was an excellent performance in Pittsburgh by Governor Lawrence who strongly supported what the President is doing.

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By D. W. S. Date 6/21/76

Ambassador Lodge said that from his week of travel he had the clear conviction the Khrushchev is a remarkable, although very difficult, man. He then gave a personality sketch of Mr. Khrushchev. Mr. Lodge spoke from notes which he will furnish as the basis for his oral report to the President. He said that Mr. Khrushchev has an open mind on some things, although not on the Communist "religion." He is a very good and attentive listener. While he says that he saw nothing he did not know about on the trip, it is obvious that it has had an impact on him. First, he better understands the independent, separate nature of our local government. Second, he is deeply impressed by much that he has seen -- the condition and attitudes of our people, our roads, automobiles, factories, etc. He was struck by the vitality of our people. He probably does not now really think that the Soviets are likely to surpass us, at least anytime soon.

With regard to policy questions, it is clear that he wants peace and thinks that Russia needs peace in order to do what he wants the nation to do. He thinks his disarmament scheme has serious merit. He is ready to ease up on jamming of Voice of America broadcasts, but will not allow appeals to rebel against the government to be made to the Russian people. He is very correct and conventional regarding China, but says no more than he absolutely has to say on this subject. He seems ready to agree on an exchange of books. He also is agreeable to an information questionnaire on national needs for internal security forces. He seems to be ready to settle the lend-lease accounts. He is boastful of having penetrated the CIA. He says he has cut down the number of Soviet Secret Police by 75%. He wants to trade jet planes with us, and leave his TU-114 with us. (Mr. Merchant said it is having mechanical difficulties.) He is keenly interested in having a treaty of peace and friendship with the United States. He is interested in expanding trade and removing restrictions upon trade. He may gradually remove some of the restrictions on travel within the Soviet Union, but should be allowed to do this by himself, in his own time, without being pressed.

Ambassador Lodge said he hopes that the atmosphere when Khrushchev leaves will be one of "let's keep on talking." It is important to decide whether the President is going to Russia or not. Ambassador

Thompson suggested that this should not be put on the basis of making them pay some price to get the President to come. The President said he would of course not do this, but would simply leave the timing uncertain. The minimum in his mind is that Khrushchev must make some proposal by which the world could understand that we are not to have a catastrophe over Berlin.

Ambassador Lodge suggested that some time the President should thank the Air Force, the railroads, the police and others who had a hand in the arrangements for Mr. Khrushchev for the splendid work they did. At the same time he thought we should make a study of our system of handling the visits of Chiefs of State. This was too casual and decentralized. Mayors are much too independent to leave to work matters out on their own. In fact, we should not rely heavily on local politicians.

The President recalled that no one had thought of taking Khrushchev around on this kind of a trip when the proposal was made. This was something he asked for. There is an obvious risk since he is the embodiment of evil in the eyes of many people.

Mr. Lodge said that some of the worst difficulty came from the turmoil created by newsmen. They were all right at fixed installations where they were kept under careful control, but where there was movement in the open the situation was terrible.

The President thought that if in his talks with Khrushchev they could get two or three significant things lined up, he could then take Khrushchev up to his farm, giving no advance notice. He might even drop in with him at the Navy football game, although this seemed unlikely.

Ambassador Thompson observed that Khrushchev did not consult Gromyko in preparing his speeches. Rather he called on his son-in-law and members of his personal staff; his daughters also apparently had a hand in them. Ambassador Thompson said that Menshikov was constantly feeding poison to Khrushchev throughout the trip. Mr. Lodge confirmed this, saying that whenever there was something that could be criticized, Menshikov would do this.

He also tried to keep Lodge away from Khrushchev but failed in this. The President agreed with this judgment, indicating that he considers Menshikov evil and stupid.

The President said he is trying to get a central idea on which to base the discussions. He thought he might say that Khrushchev has now had a good introduction to our country, and that the big thing that he wants to know is whether Khrushchev truly wants to promote the conditions that will bring true peace and make it last, and not just spar for advantage in the discussions. If the former is true, while we may have fluctuations in our relations and occasional difficulties, we can go back to this principle and make progress. Under this concept, Berlin is just something that they want, an advantage they are trying to gain. The President said he would try to set some such pattern as this in the discussions this evening.

The President said he is considering going to church at 8:30 AM in Gettysburg. He could be back at Camp David at 10:00. Mr. Herter said that in the meantime Mr. Dillon could talk about trade questions with the Soviets. Ambassador Lodge felt that Khrushchev would probably not want to go to church. He was offered the opportunity to do so on the trip, but said it would be misunderstood.

In commenting about Germany, the President noted that we have a treaty with West Germany, and cannot of course keep him from having one with East Germany. Mr. Herter said the real point is that he cannot, by concluding a treaty, terminate our rights. Ambassador Thompson suggested asking Khrushchev what he thinks the consequences of such a peace treaty would be. Mr. Merchant thought this would be a good way of bringing out that he cannot sign away our rights. The President commented that if Khrushchev could agree to let the German question rest for three years while we go ahead with actions in other fields, we may find that it becomes easier to solve. Mr. Herter added that they must not push us on reducing troops or curtailing our freedoms there in the meantime. The President asked whether there would be any point in his taking this matter up with Khrushchev alone. Mr. Herter thought this was a promising thing to do. Ambassador Lodge commented, however, that Gromyko had proved to be a good influence on Khrushchev during the trip. He returned again to the subject of Menshikov,

indicating that Menshikov had arranged the dinner last night directly with Mr. Kidder of the Journal of Commerce and that the dinner had been a gross mistake, both because Mr. Khrushchev was so tired and needed the rest and also because it became the occasion for a couple of very unskilled and rather stupid people to try to "bait" and heckle Mr. Khrushchev.

The President said he might start off by saying that he realized that there had been some unpleasant incidents on Mr. Khrushchev's trip and that he is sorry for them. At the dinner last night, people were picked to attend who had no more sense than to try to needle him. Mr. Lodge said that the trouble arose in several places where the group tried to treat Mr. Khrushchev like a visiting lecturer rather than the head of a powerful nation. He said that it is possible to reason with Khrushchev, providing one approaches him correctly. The President suggested that someone tell Gromyko that he feels we should not make Berlin the one thing that governs and controls our entire relationship. Ambassador Thompson said that he believes Khrushchev really does want us to accept the status quo as the prive of having peace. He thought, therefore, that a good approach would be to say that the settlement of the cold war does not remove the issue of Eastern Europe. The split of Germany is dangerous. Regarding Eastern Europe, we have no thought of the use of force, but we do hope that the governments there will become more responsive to the will of their people. The President recalled that in 1952 he had said we would use all peaceable means toward their liberation, and that he had confirmed that Foster Dulles agreed with this (after some initial public confusion). The President asked whether he could call on someone on the subject of disarmament to expound what we think about the matter generally and about Khrushchev's proposal. Mr. Herter initially misunderstood and told the President what is being prepared on the longer range basis. The President asked who would be ready to talk on this tomorrow -- who knows the details of Khrushchev's plan. Mr. Herter commented on some elements of the plan -- for example, that no control machinery is provided for its early stage. However, Mr. Herter did see an element of genuineness in Khrushchev's proposal. He hoped the "Committee of Ten" of the United Nations could go into it very thoroughly and in detail.

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Mr. Herter said there is good prospect of some agreement on exchanges and contacts, and on the peaceful application of atomic energy. The President said he is rather dubious as to whether anything can be done regarding outer space agreements. The President told the group that the networks have indicated they would give him a half hour at 10:30 on Sunday night if he found it necessary, and that he could let them know as late as 7 P. M. on Sunday. Mr. Herter thought it might be as well or perhaps better simply to issue a statement by the President if one were needed. He thought it is better not to have the notion of a "reply" speech hanging over Khrushchev's head. The President said, however, that our people are worried, and he is anxious that they should not have a wrong impression concerning the talks. Mr. Lodge also thought it would not look good to say that we are holding time in reserve. The President emphasized that he has no thought of letting this be known publicly.

Secretary Herter strongly recommended holding a press conference next Tuesday to sum up and comment on the visit. Mr. Lodge said he hoped the President could there express appreciation to the people who helped on the trip. The President asked that the State Department prepare a three-minute statement he could read to open the press conference which he might decide to hold on Monday.

As the meeting broke up, Ambassador Thompson said he hoped the President might find an opportunity to express awareness that Khrushchev is trying to raise the living conditions of his people.

A. J. Goodpaster
Brigadier General, USA

